

**EXCERPT FROM NEW YORK WATERWAYS
MARINE OPERATIONS MANUAL PERTAINING TO
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

5 PAGES (INCLUDING COVER)

5. *Emergency Procedures*

handle a person overboard is to prevent it in the first place. Deck hands should be among the passengers as much as possible. Keep a sharp eye on unruly children, or other passengers displaying signs of intoxication, boisterous behavior, emotional distress or other unstable condition. Intervene if you feel their behavior may lead to a unintentional, or intentional, swim. One summer evening on the way back from a Yankee game, three passengers felt they would get home quicker if they jumped off in the East River at 35th street and swam in, rather than waiting for the boat to moor. Well they were wrong, and their actions created a delay for everybody while they were rescued.

The following actions shall be taken for man overboard situations:

- a. Make a broadcast announcing the incident on 13 and 16, and immediately throw a ring buoy overboard as close to the person in the water (PIW) as possible. There are three liferings on each boat; one aft of the pilothouse, one at the bow, and one at the stern. The one at the bow should have a marker light and thirty feet of polypropelene line. The marker light should be used at night to mark the location the person fell over. This will be helpful if a search must be conducted.
- b. Designate a lookout who shall maintain CONTINUOUS visual contact with the PIW at all times. It is helpful to point a finger at the person at all times. This person should be near the pilothouse to be able to relay information to the captain. If no deckhand is available for this a passenger should be appointed this function.
- c. Maneuver the vessel to retrieve the PIW. In choppy seas it may be best to approach from upwind so as to create a lee from the seas. In all other conditions, it is usually best to approach from downwind and down-current to allow the person to be set down to you, rather than away from you.
- d. Deckhand(s) should don a PFD.
- e. When close to the PIW, position the rescue ladder. This will require two people and that the fore deck be cleared of passengers. Each person (two deckhands or captain and deckhand) should take one end of the ladder and descend the stairs on each side. If necessary, a deckhand should descend the ladder to recover the PIW. The deckhand should be wearing a PFD and should be attached to the vessel by a tending line. Do not attach the tending line to the ladder or to the same thing the ladder is attached to. If the ladder is dragged down, you don't want to go with it.
- f. If necessary, the deckhand should enter the water to rescue the victim. This may be necessary if the victim is incapable of getting up the ladder, or is unable to swim or is slipping under the water. In these cases, the deckhand should be attached to a tending line, which should be tended at all times to keep the slack out. Allow enough slack for the deckhand to maneuver and swim, but not so much that he or she may become entangled in it. If unable to get the person up the ladder, keep them on the platform and keep their head above water.
- g. If the PIW is not immediately located, notify the Coast Guard and other vessels in the vicinity by radiotelephone.
- h. Continue to search until released by the Coast Guard.

5. *Emergency Procedures*

4. **Fire** Fire at sea is a nightmare that all mariners dread. The main reason for this is that there is usually no place to hide or escape from the fire, except into a lifeboat or into the sea. Mariners learn that they must be self sufficient in terms of fire fighting, and more importantly, fire prevention. What help is available is considered an added bonus. In our area of operations we are fortunate to have plenty of other vessels in the vicinity that can respond to an emergency such as fire on board. We have the Coast Guard and fire and police boats near by. And we are rarely more than a half mile from shore, where we can always go to offload passengers in an emergency. However, it is still extremely important that we are able to respond to a fire aboard our vessels. We could lose power and communications and have only ourselves to rely on in an emergency, until someone notices we are in trouble and responds. That could be up to ten or fifteen minutes, which is plenty of time for an engine room fire to spread to the rest of the boat. Therefore, in the case of a fire, the following steps shall be followed:

- Cut off air supply to the fire. Close openings such as hatches, ports, doors, ventilators, and louvers, and secure ventilation systems and blowers.
- Secure electrical systems supplying the effected compartment.
- If safe to do so, immediately use portable fire extinguishers at the base of the flames for flammable liquids or grease fires, or use water for ordinary combustible materials. Do not use water on electrical fires.
- If the fire is in a machinery space, shut off fuel supply and ventilation and activate fixed fire extinguishing system.
- Maneuver vessel to minimize effects of the wind on the fire.
- Immediately notify the Coast Guard and other vessels in the area by radiotelephone.
- Move passengers away from the fire. Have them put on PFDs and if necessary prepare to abandon ship.

Most of our vessels have three pumps which may be used for fire fighting. The primary pump is the fire pump. It is energized at the gray reset box and also has a breaker on the main panel. The inlet valve must be open and the valve to the fire main must also be open. Then energize the pump which will charge the fire main. If the fire pump is not working, the bilge pump may be aligned for use as a fire pump. It is also energized at a reset box on the bulkhead above it and by the breaker. The valves must be aligned to allow sea suction and discharge into the fire main. If this pump is not working, as a last resort, the 12 volt pump mounted on the front of the starboard engine may be used. It is activated by a small toggle switch. This pump will burn out if it has no or insufficient water flow. Feel the pipe coming from the pump. If it is cold to the touch, it is flowing properly. If it is warm, shut the pump off immediately or risk losing it altogether.

The bilge manifold is a series of valves that are used to select where water should come from, and where it should go to. For firefighting purposes, the water should come from the sea chest and go to the fire main system. On either end of the manifold is overboard discharge, for dewatering. This is basically a port/starboard decision. The other valves

5. Emergency Procedures

determine where the water comes from. The handles are labeled in the center with metal tags. The manifold is used in conjunction with the bilge pump for dewatering various compartments as selected by the valves.

D. Station Bill

A station bill is a list of duties and who shall perform them during emergencies. The station bill must be posted near the master in the operating station on vessels of more than 65 feet that require more than four crew members. We operate vessels of differing design and configuration, so the specific duties may vary slightly from vessel to vessel, however, generally the duties will be similar to those outlined below:

Crewmember

Duty

Deckhand

- Close hatches, airlocks, watertight doors, vents, scuppers, and valves for intake and discharge lines that penetrate the hull
- Secure fans, blowers, and ventilation systems
- Operate all safety equipment
- Prepare and launch survival craft
- Extinguishing fire
- Damage control and dewatering
- Assembling passengers and directing them to their appointed stations
- Keeping order in passageways and stairways and generally controlling the movement of the passengers

Crewmember

Duty

Master

- Operating the vessel to minimize risk to the passengers
- Making announcements and warnings to the passengers
- Directing the efforts of the crew
- Making emergency communications and notification to the Coast Guard and other vessels in the vicinity

Nothing in the emergency instructions or a station bill exempts any licensed individual from the exercise of good judgement in an emergency situation.

5. Emergency Procedures

E. Emergency Communications

1. **General:** Communications are critically important during an emergency. Summoning assistance in a timely manner can mean the difference between life and death. Unfortunately, this is forgotten all too many times during the intense stress of an actual emergency. It is not uncommon for vessels in emergency situations to fail to call for help until it is too late. A way to increase the odds that timely and effective emergency communications will happen, is to establish standard procedures, and to train on them on a regular basis. The following Emergency Broadcast Instructions shall be posted in the wheel house near the radio transmitter. These should be rehearsed on a regular basis, and in the event of an emergency, it is better to call early, and then cancel the request if not needed, than to delay calling for assistance until it is too late. Don't forget to call for help, and don't be shy about it.

2. **Emergency Broadcast Instructions:**

- a. Make sure your radiotelephone is ON.
- b. Select channel 16.
- c. Press microphone switch and say calmly and clearly "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY" for situations involving immediate danger to life and property; or "PAN PAN, PAN PAN, PAN PAN" for urgent situations where no immediate danger to life or property exists.
- d. Say: "This is the motor vessel insert name here insert call sign here"
- e. Release microphone button and listen for acknowledgement. If no one answers, repeat steps c & d.
- f. If you receive a response from another station, say, "MAYDAY, insert vessel name here"
- g. Describe your position. Position may be given in latitude and longitude or using a geographical reference, i.e. distance and bearing from a known landmark.
- h. State the nature of your distress, i.e. fire, taking on water, injury, etc.
- i. Give the number of persons on board
- j. Estimate the seaworthiness of your vessel.
- k. Describe your vessel; length, color, hull type/material, masts, etc.
- l. Describe lifesaving apparatus at your disposal; rafts, boats, pfds, etc.
- m. Say "I will be listening on channel 16"
- n. End message by saying "This is the motor vessel insert name and call sign here, out"
- o. If your situation permits, stand by the radio to await further instructions from the Coast Guard.